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ABSTRACT

Local Early Childhood Advisory Committees in Iowa studied early childhood education programs and the need for additional programs in local communities. By August, 1990, committees in 351 of Iowa's 430 school districts had made recommendations to local school boards, the Iowa Department of Education, and the Iowa General Assembly. Types of programs considered were: (1) programs for at-risk children; (2) Head Start; (3) preschool programs; (4) kindergarten; (5) before- and after-school child care; (6) school-age child care during summer vacations and school holidays; and (7) parent education and support programs. Committee reports first addressed the need for community collaboration in providing child care. Discussion then turned to program types. Programs for at-risk students were offered in 61 districts, and Head Start programs in 168 districts. Preschool programs were available in 34 districts. While 130 districts recommended that their district not offer a preschool, 80 recommended that a preschool be established. Kindergarten programs varied among all-day, everyday; half-day, everyday; and other combinations. Some districts offered extended-day kindergarten or transition classes. Few districts offered school-age care, and a minority recommended offering it. High school family living courses were offered in 89.6 percent of the districts. Committees made a series of policy recommendations. A list of eight references and a list of Iowa's Public School Districts are included. (BC)

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Iowa
Local Early Childhood
Advisory Committee Reports

An Analysis of Community Programs, Needs, and Possibilities

Iowa Department of Education
October 1990

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Iowa
Local Early Childhood
Advisory Committee Reports

An Analysis of Community Programs, Needs, and Possibilities

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Executive Summary

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An Analysis of Community Programs, Needs, and Possibilities

"It is the goal of the General Assembly to ensure that early childhood educational opportunities are available to meet the needs of all children in this state through a coordinated early childhood education delivery system. This coordinated system should involve the participation of parents, communities, school districts, and other government agencies and allow each school district to adopt the program which is best suited to the needs of the community, using both local and state resources and expertise." ---Senate File 223

Task

Local Early Childhood Advisory Committees were to study and provide recommendations to their local school boards, Iowa Department of Education, and the General Assembly relating to existing early childhood programs and the need for additional programs within the local community. This committee was to be formed by October 1, 1989, and file a summary report with the local school board and the Department of Education by August 1, 1990. Comments were to be solicited from private providers. Many committees surveyed their community. By August 1, 1990, 351 of Iowa's 430 school districts (81.6%) had responded to this task. As of September 28, 1990, 404 (93.95%) of the districts had completed the survey and returned comments regarding their study.

Suggested Participants

The participants of the local committee were to be a community-wide cross section of those who provide services and programs to young children. This committee might have included representatives from the following groups: parents, private providers, religious organizations, school and special education personnel, special groups in the community (Kiwanis, Lions, League of Women Voters), Head Start, local resource and referral agencies, community members knowledgeable about appropriate programs for young children, health services and community agencies, AEAs, business and industry, community education advisory boards, home extension economists, recreation departments, local agencies that issue licenses or provide resources for children with special needs, and other professionals within the community.

Specific Program Identification

Specific programs to be considered: at-risk programs, Head Start, preschool programs (both public and private), kindergarten, before and after school child care, school-age child care during summer vacations and school holidays, and parent education and support programs.

Future

The local early childhood advisory committee reports will be used to guide the State Board of Education and the General Assembly in future decisions regarding the care and education of young children in the state of Iowa. The goal of the Department of Education is to propose a comprehensive, long range plan for early childhood education, to the State Board of Education and the General Assembly by January, 1991.

Community Programs, Needs, and Possibilities

This summary is based on the reports received by August 1, 1990, from 351 (81.6%) of Iowa's 430 school districts.

Child Care: Communities were surveyed in 314 (91.8%) of the reporting districts. Commentary was solicited from private child care providers in 325 (94.8%) of the communities. Infant care, care for sick children, and infant care for teen parents returning to school, were all areas of need in the child care context. The need for community collaboration and mandatory registration of all home providers were two issues repeatedly addressed by the committee reports.

At-Risk and Head Start Programs: Early intervention programs designed to serve low-income families and children who are 3- and 4-years-old were identified. At-risk programs were offered in 61 (17.4%) of the districts. The recommendation to seek funding for an at-risk program was documented by 117 (34.53%) of the districts. An estimated 15,551 children were identified as eligible for an at-risk program, but unserved. Head Start programs were offered in 168 (48.3%) of the districts; 100 (29.2%) would choose to expand the current program; 37 (10.8%) of the districts would like to begin a Head Start program. An estimated 3,629 children were identified eligible, but unserved in Head Start.

Preschool Programs: School districts offering a preschool program for all eligible 4-year-olds were available in 34 of 351 (9.7%) of the districts reporting. District recommendations for preschool were: 130 (38.24%) recommended that they should not offer a preschool; 80 (23.52%) recommended they establish a preschool; 69 (20.32%) made other decisions, and 26 (7.61%) would like to expand their current program.

Kindergarten: **The predominant kindergarten program offered in 430 districts for the 1990-91 school year is: 180 all day, everyday; 115 half day, everyday; 135 districts offer other program models or combination of models. These figures reflect a change from the committee reports which identified the program offered in 431 districts during the 1989-90 school year as:** 163 offer all day, everyday; 117 offer half day, everyday; 151 offer other program models or a combination of models. Recommendations for future kindergarten programs were: 219 (62.4%) of 351 districts reporting, recommend continuation of the existing program; 89 (25.4%) recommend offering all day, everyday; 36 (10.2%) made other recommendations. **Extended day kindergarten,** or other funded programs were offered in 30 districts (8.7%) of the 346 districts responding. **The average class size** reported by 345 districts was: 20 or less in 151 districts (43.8%); class size of 21-24 in 130 districts (37.7%); classes of 25-27 in 38 districts (11.0%) ; and classes of 28 or more in 26 (7.5%) districts. **Transition classes** for age-eligible kindergarten children were offered in 55 districts (15.7%); transition first grade programs were offered in 39 districts (11.1%); transition programs after first grade were offered in 3 districts (.9%). Teachers holding an **early childhood license** were available in 240 districts, of 351 responding; 111 districts did not have any staff certified in early childhood. Administrators holding an early childhood license were not available in 311 of 351 districts; 40 districts had one or more administrators licensed for early childhood. An **early childhood special education license** was held by teachers in 114 of 351 districts, 237 districts did not have any teachers with this endorsement. Administrators holding an early childhood special education license were available in four districts; 347 districts did not have an administrator holding this license.

School Age Child Care: Currently, 27 districts of 351 responding, offer before school care; 31 offer after school care; 11 offer holiday care; and 14 offer summer child care programs. Recommendations for school age child care were: 146 (41.8%) would like to offer after school care; 130 (37.2%) would like to offer before school care; 56 (16.8%) would recommend summer child care; and 55 districts (15.0%) would recommend offering care during school holidays. The need to begin breakfast programs was also documented in many reports.

Parent Education and Support Programs: District sponsored programs for parents included: family living courses for high school students offered, but not required in 89.6% of the districts; 88.4% of the districts referred parents to other support agencies; 75.7% used parents as volunteers; and family resource centers were offered in 4.1% of the districts.

Community Programs, Needs, and Future Plans: As a result of the year of study, Local Early Childhood Advisory Committees made policy recommendations, identified services, prioritized their needs, established a vision for future plans, increased awareness, and opened doors to new partnerships for young children and their families. Policy recommendations included: state funding for early childhood programs with local choice options; legislative support for stability and consistency in early childhood programs; increased community collaboration to provide comprehensive services; increased parental involvement and support for parent education; businesses becoming more "family friendly"; regulations that encourage, rather than inhibit, cooperation; and a commitment to focus on developmentally appropriate practices for young children in early elementary programs. Many committees encouraged the continuation of local or regional child development councils to advocate programs and policies and recommended increased communication and collaborative efforts for children and families.

---Iowa Department of Education, October 1, 1990

Iowa
Local Early Childhood Advisory Committees

"We applaud the legislators of the state for seeking input from local constituents, and trust the information will be utilized to enhance the lives of children and families in the community and state."
---Burlington Early Childhood Committee

"It is the goal of the General Assembly to ensure that early childhood educational opportunities are available to meet the needs of all children in this state through a coordinated early childhood education delivery system. This coordinated system should involve the participation of parents, communities, school districts, and other government agencies and allow each school district to adopt the program which is best suited to the needs of the community, using both local and state resources and expertise."
Senate File 223

Task

Thus began the mandate for the formation of Local Early Childhood Advisory Committees in each Iowa school district. Based on the concept of schools as the hub of the community, this collaborative effort, representing various community partners, was to identify the existing programs for the care and education of young children in each Iowa community and the need for additional programs. Recommendations were to be submitted to the local school board, the Iowa Department of Education and the General Assembly.

This committee was to be formed by October 1, 1989, and file a summary report with the local school board and the Department of Education by August 1, 1990. Comments were to be solicited from private providers and many committees surveyed the community. By August 1, 1990, 351 of Iowa's 430 public school districts (81.6%) had responded to this task. As of September 28, 1990, 404 (93.95%) of the districts had completed the survey and returned comments regarding their study.

Suggested Participants

The participants of the local committee were to be a community-wide cross section of those who provide services and programs to young children. This committee might include representatives from the following groups: parents, private providers, religious organizations, school and special education personnel, special groups in the community (Kiwanis, Lions, League of Women Voters), Head Start, local resource and referral agencies, community members knowledgeable about appropriate programs for young children, health services and community agencies, AEAs, business and

industry, community education advisory boards, home extension economists, recreation departments, local agencies that issue licenses or provide resources for children with special needs, and other professionals within the community.

Specific Program Identification

Specific programs to be considered: at-risk programs, Head Start, preschool programs (both public and private), kindergarten, before and after school care, school-age child care during summer vacations and school holidays, and parent education and support programs.

Local committees were asked to identify what programs and practices were offered in the community. What agencies were collaborating to create comprehensive services for children? How could additional coordination occur?

Needs

What needs are being met and what are the unserved areas of need? What are the roadblocks to providing the needed programs? Are the barriers space, lack of financial support, lack of community support or demand, personnel, or something else?

Recommendations for the Future

How can we design a community plan that will provide comprehensive services for young children and their families - at the state, regional, and local level? How can we increase collaborative efforts? Do present practices coordinate programs? How can we create affordable or cost-effective early childhood care? How can we ensure quality? How can we ensure accessibility?

The findings of the local early childhood committee will provide information about the services currently provided for young children across the state. The information will guide the State Board of Education, legislators, administrators, and communities in their future decisions about young children. The goal of the Department of Education is to propose a comprehensive, long range plan for early childhood education, to the State Board of Education and the General Assembly by January, 1991.

"This is a typical school district that is doing a good job on limited resources. We discovered a willingness to improve the quality and type of education this district offers and look forward to improved early childhood care in this district."

---Maple Valley Early Childhood Committee

Child Care

"The Early Childhood Advisory Committee struggled to face the realities of changed family life and the consequences for children today. Members expressed misgivings and reservations about institutions taking on what were seen as traditional parent responsibilities in the lives of children. A committee consensus emerged which called for a firm, community-wide commitment to the existing needs of young children and their parents today."

---Cherokee Early Childhood Committee

The area of child care was addressed by many Local Early Childhood Advisory Committees. By August 1, 1990, committee reports were received from 351 districts of the 430 districts. Comments were solicited from preschool and child care providers in 325 (94.8%) of the districts. Surveys were distributed in 314 (91.8%) of the communities. The following comments gathered from written summaries reflect the consideration given child care, both profit and nonprofit private and public services within these Iowa communities.

Need

Committees stated a need for quality, licensed, private providers to ensure the availability of child care and that standards would be met. In some communities, there were no **licensed day care centers.** Many families who responded to surveys stated that they used non-registered homes. In some communities, 85 percent of those surveyed, used non-registered home providers for child care. In some cases, unlicensed care was identified as substandard-but it was "cheap". Many voiced support for the mandatory registration of all family day care homes.

Infant Care

The need for infant care was noted to be very, very difficult to find. Providers to care for infants through 2-years-old were simply not available.

Teen Parents

Child care for teen parents who are trying to return to school was identified as another area of need. Child care was expensive, but essential for teens returning to school. Young women, in particular, will need this kind of child care to finish their education.

Sick Child Care

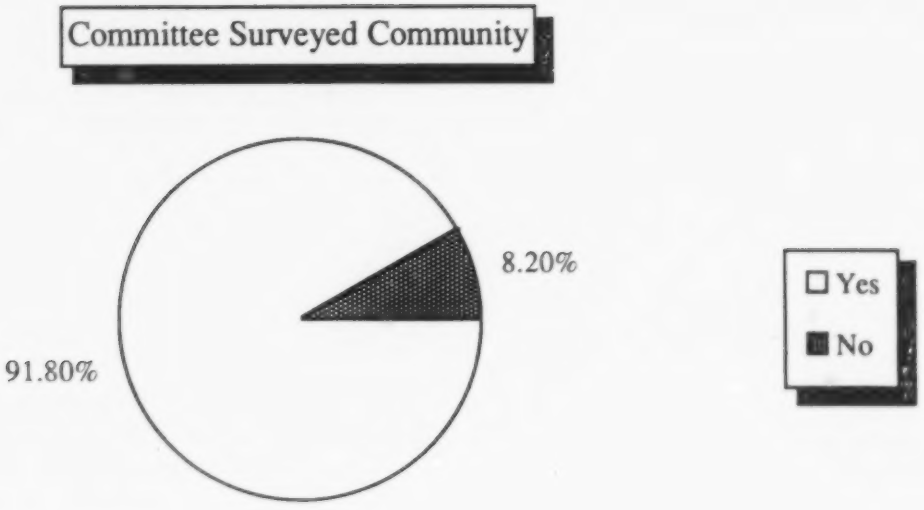
Sick child care was also identified as a void in the child care puzzle. The suggestion was made for community organizations - such as hospitals, nursing services, churches, and retired citizens to become involved and help coordinate efforts for those children who are ill, particularly those with the "typical childhood diseases," such as chicken pox. While this was not viewed as appropriate for public schools, it was a concern.

Night Care

Night care for children of parents working night shifts and also for planting time was stated as a need.

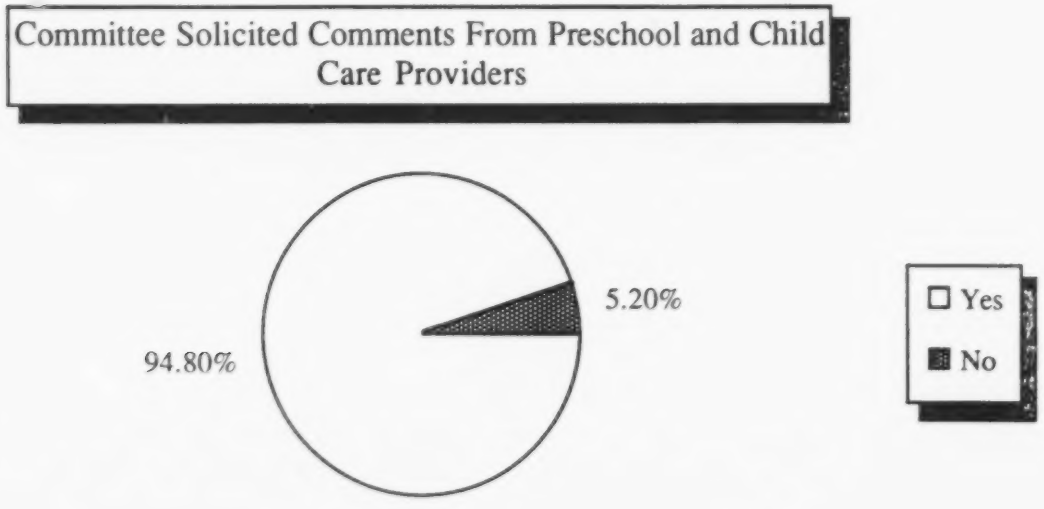
Transportation

Transportation was also stated as a problem between school and child care centers or home providers was a problem.



Private Providers

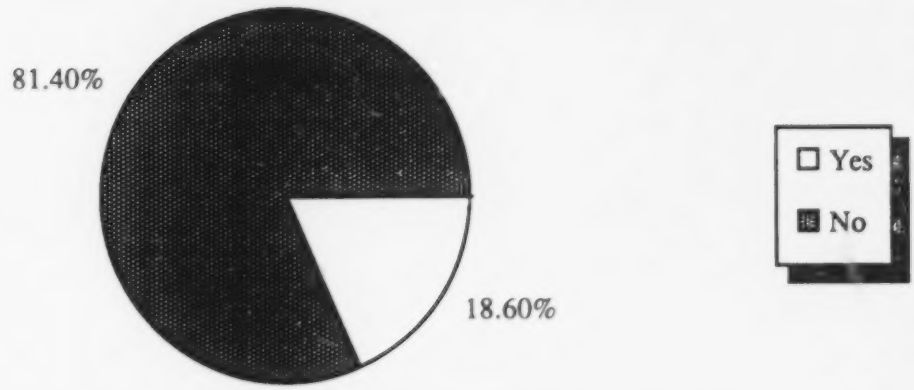
Private providers were recognized for providing quality programs and meeting the child care needs of many families and communities. However, their salaries remain embarrassingly low, often minimum wage with few, if any benefits. Due to the private enterprise within each community, the area of child care for very young children was not viewed as a program that should be state funded, nor is it the responsibility of the school. Many families were satisfied with their own arrangements.



Communication and Community Cooperation

The school should become more involved with private providers by sharing materials and **communicating** with children and families. The issue of providing transportation between the private providers and the school-based programs was a possibility for some. Many stated the need to improve cooperation to better meet the needs of children. Others expressed an interest in parent **cooperatives** for child care. One district described a community child care nonprofit day care center. In this cooperative example, the center rents school space, has reduced rates, and offers before and after school care. This district also commented that they have a continual shortage of funds and rely a great deal on community support.

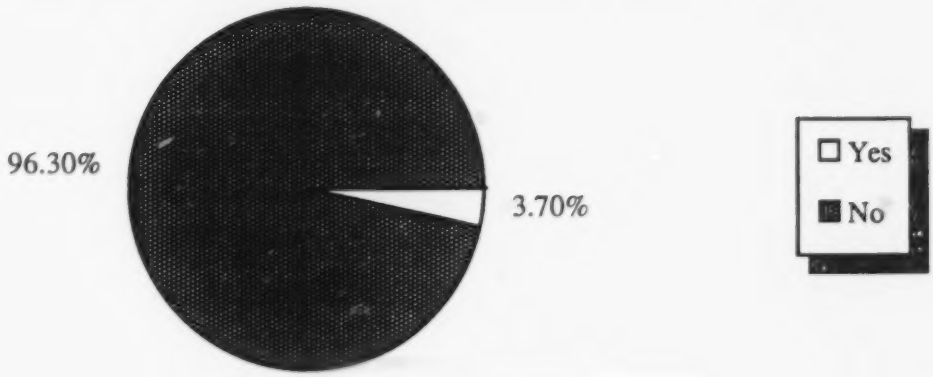
Child Care Offered in Collaboration With Another Agency



District Sponsored Child Care for Employees

Employee sponsored child care was offered by 13 districts. These districts provided care for infants through school age children.

District Sponsored Child Care for Employees Offered



Iowa Code

Child care is defined as either family day care homes that provide care for six or fewer children at one time or day care centers that provide care for seven or more children. The Department of Human Services is responsible for licensing all child day care centers in Iowa. Family day care homes that provide care for 7-11 children are required to be registered.

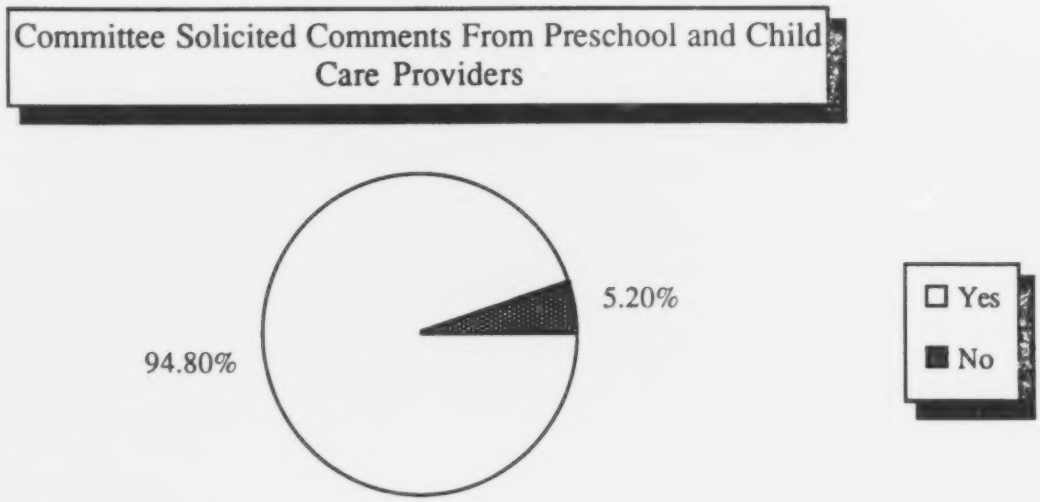
Iowa Statistics

Currently in Iowa, there are 1,250 licensed day care centers and preschools in Iowa. According to the Department of Human Services, preschools are on the decline and licensed day care services are increasing. As parents become more educated consumers about child care, they will look more carefully at the choices for their children.

- **In 1990, there were three counties in Iowa that have no licensed preschools.(2)**
- **Fifteen counties in Iowa have no licensed day care center as of June, 1990.(2)**
- **There are six Iowa counties with no registered group day care homes as of June, 1990.(2)**
- **In 1980, 14.8% of Iowa's children lived in single-parent families.(2)**
- **Children under the age of 18 comprise 25.83% of the state's populations. Children under the age of five total 196,000.(2)**
- **In 1986, 9.2% of all births in Iowa were to teens. Of the 3,569 babies born to teenagers, 2,142 or 60% were born out-of wedlock.(2)**
- **A teen mother has one-half the lifetime earnings of a woman who has her first child at age 20 or later.(5)**
- **Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies were funded in 16 counties, serving a total of 55 counties.(2)**

Discussion

There is a need for coordination and effective use of services and resources provided in both the public and private sectors. With increased awareness of agency resources and services, parents and private providers can coordinate the continuity of programs offered to young children. The benefits of the face-to-face discourse that has occurred as a result of these committees, may prove to connect entities to the people who need them and improve the comprehensive services. The committees who began this study would increase the likelihood of improving conditions by continuing to meet and coordinate their planning, their resources, and their goals.



"Efforts to communicate and collaborate must be a high priority by the school district in order to establish a trust and kinship with other child care providers rather than an adversarial relationship."

---Council Bluffs Local Early Childhood Committee

At-Risk and Head Start Programs

"In summary, the committee's efforts have certainly had some outstanding rapid results. We see that for the first time in this community's history, programs cooperating and working together for the common good of our most precious resource, the children."

---Sigourney Early Childhood Committee

The Iowa Local Early Childhood Advisory Committees were asked to study the need for at-risk and Head Start programs for young children. The vision for children and families in Iowa is to have access to early childhood educational opportunities that meet the needs of all children and their families. Too often, Iowa families with the greatest economic need are unable to access the support services, training opportunities, and links with employment to become self-sufficient. By August 1, 1990, 351 districts had responded to the request to look at the need for **early intervention programs.** This summary is compiled from the Local Early Childhood Advisory Committee reports.

Program Definition

At-Risk Programs

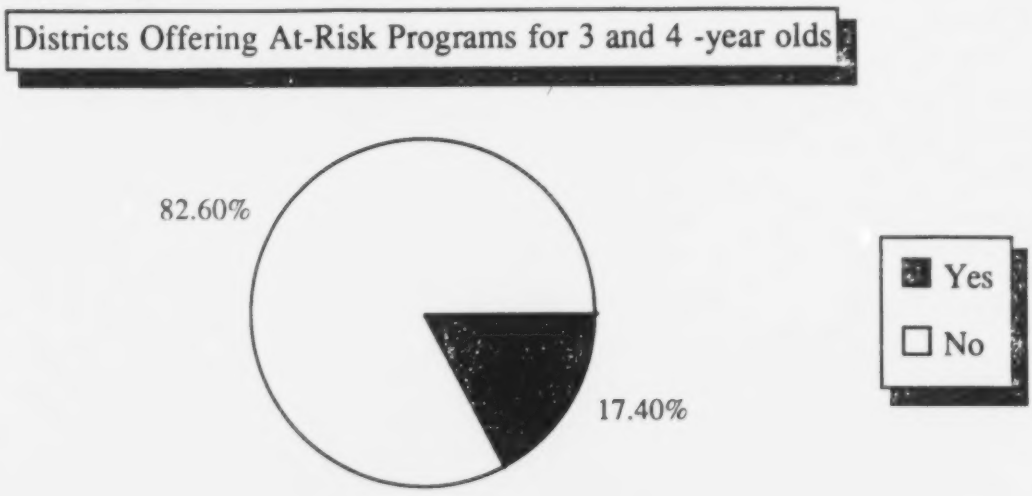
At-Risk programs serve any child who, because of physical or environmental influence, is at-risk of entering the educational program at the kindergarten level lacking sufficient development necessary to succeed. Young children at-risk primarily come from low-income or families living in poverty. Other factors that **may be risk indicators** are: functioning below chronological age in two or more developmental areas, one of which may be English; being born at biological risk, such as low birth weight; a child who parents are teen parents, substance abusers, or child or spouse abusers, incarcerated, illiterate or homeless. Young children at-risk usually indicate a family at-risk and vice versa.

Head Start Programs

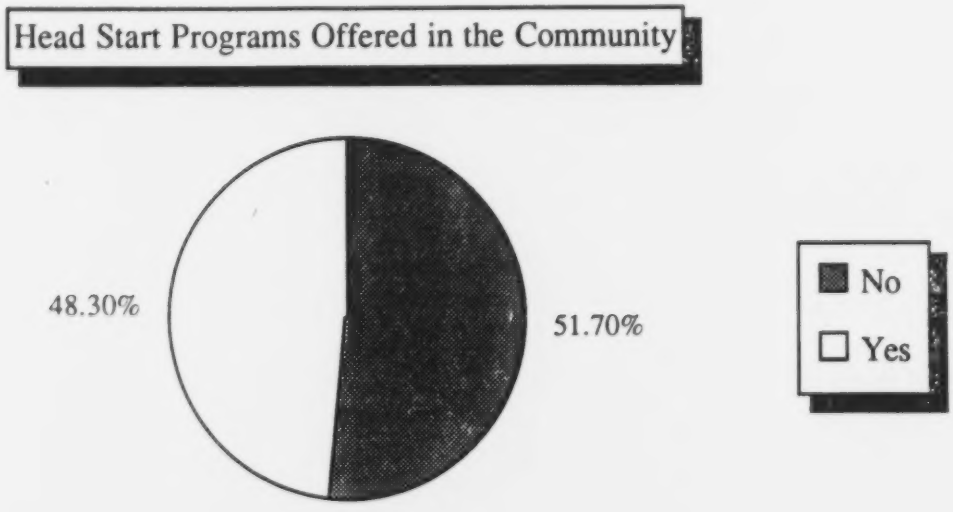
Head Start programs serve 3- and 4-year-old children and their families from low-income families. Head Start provides comprehensive developmental services in the areas of social, medical, dental, nutritional, mental health, and educational components. The overall goal of the Head Start program is to bring about a greater degree of social competence in children of low-income families.

Current At-Risk and Head Start Programs

At-Risk programs for 3- and 4-year-olds were offered in 61 (17.4%) of the districts, serving 419 eligible children.



Head Start programs were offered in 168 (48.3%) of the communities, serving 2,107 eligible children.

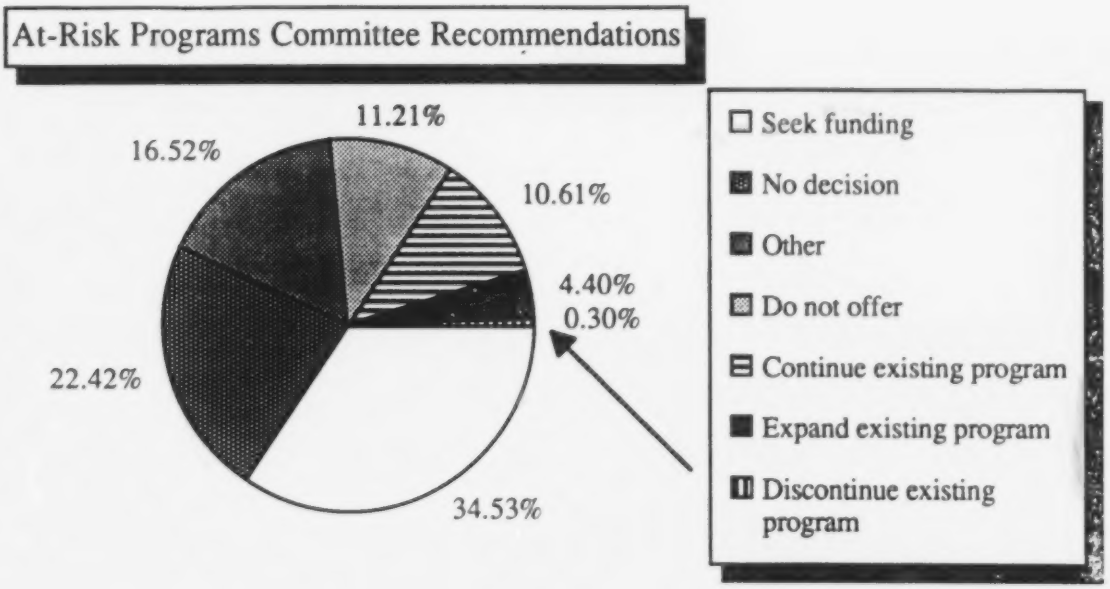


Needs and Recommendations

Of the 339 districts reporting, the committees' recommendations for at-risk programs were:

- 117 districts would choose to seek funding to provide a program
- 76 did not make a decision
- 56 districts made other recommendations
- 38 districts would not seek to offer an at-risk program
- 36 districts would continue the existing program
- 15 districts would like to expand the existing program
- 1 district would discontinue the existing program

The total estimated number of 3- and 4-year-olds eligible for an at-risk program who were not served was **15,551**.

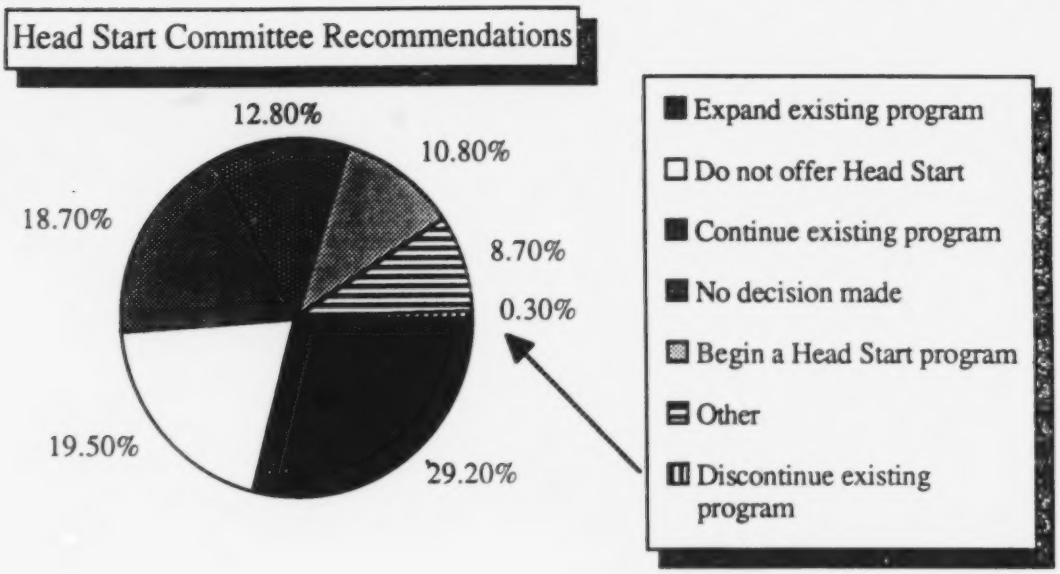


Head Start

Of the 343 districts reporting, the committee recommendations for Head Start programs were:

- 100 districts would choose to expand
- 67 chose not to offer a Head Start program
- 64 would continue their program
- 44 did not make a decision
- 37 would like to begin a program
- 30 districts made other choices
- 1 district will discontinue the existing program

The total estimated number of children eligible for a Head Start program that were not served in 1989-90 was **3,629.**



Barriers

Funding was the first barrier to offering an at-risk program. Space and personnel were the second and third barriers most often perceived by the committees.
Head Start program barriers were also identified as financial, space, and lack of personnel.

Committee Concerns

Equity

Funding should be for all communities choosing to offer a program that provides early intervention. The program should be accessible for children of all income levels and include integration of special needs children.

Identification

Low-income families may be the least involved in early intervention programs. In some districts, this population was the least responsive to the survey. It is difficult to identify those who qualify for programs, beyond those who are immediately visible. AEA early intervention and physical screenings are important in identification. Coordination of preschool handicapped, Head Start, and Department of Human Services organizations, WIC (Women, Infant and Children Program), and Resource and Referral Agencies is needed to synchronize efforts. Districts noted the large number of children identified, but did not have enough resources to serve them. The significant number of children at -risk is due in large part to the effect of the economy in the area.

At-Risk

For some, the definition of at-risk was hard to define. They also recognized that many families have more than one risk factor affecting their lives. Those children with the greatest need should be prioritized for services. Ideally, all children would be served. At-risk programs for all age groups should be coordinated, including prenatal, infant and parenting programs, as well as prekindergarten through high school programs.

Labeling

Labeling children and putting them in a category of being "at-risk" is a potentially dangerous procedure. Labels may pigeon-hole children for life, or they may increase sensitivity to the growing needs of children and families. Remedial, pull-out, homogeneous classrooms, for a limited number of children, may not be the best strategy. There are many children who do not qualify for Head Start, and may not be served in the limited space available through an at-risk program. These children continue to fall through the cracks and remain unserved.

Staff

Staff should be qualified and knowledgeable about low-income families, risk factors, and child development. A coordinator for at-risk programs would facilitate coordination of services.

Collaboration and Communication

All community agencies should work together, combining resources that are available to increase their collective potential. Business and community scholarships may be established to allow all children to attend a preschool. A publication of resources available in the community would assist parents in awareness. Participants in the WIC program should be urged to become involved in other early intervention programs.

Iowa Statistics

Too often a comprehensive child development program is not available for families with young children who lack the economic means to pay for such services. The following statistics document the current status of children in Iowa.

- Iowa children living in poverty increased by 85% from 1979 to 1987.(1)
- Iowa ranks 33 out of 51 nationally for the percentage of children living in poverty in 1988.(1)
- In 1987, 21.3% of Iowa children lived in poverty. Iowa's children are more likely to be poor than any other age group.(2)
- There was an increase in the number of low-birth weight babies in Iowa from 1980 to 1988. The number of births to teenage mothers was 9.3% in 1987.(1)
- In 1990, over 56,000 Iowa children are uninsured, most of whom live in working families with incomes below 22% of the poverty level. An additional 79,000 children live in families with incomes below 200% of the poverty level and have insurance that does not cover preventive, well child health care.(3)
- In 1989, there were 6,700 founded cases of child abuse in Iowa, an increase of 49% from 1983.(3)

•In 1989, the Head Start funded enrollment in Iowa was 3,741 children. However, in 1989, there were 12,300 low-income 3- and 4-year-olds eligible for Head Start in Iowa. There are ten counties in Iowa without a Head Start program.(7)

• Among Black children in Iowa in 1987, an estimated two in five live in poverty. One in four of all Hispanic children in Iowa are poor.(5)

•By race, the population of Iowa is categorized as follows: white--96.56%; black--1.43%; white of Spanish origin--.88%; American Indian--.18%; and other .94%.(6)

•In 1989, Iowa's prison population continued to grow and far exceed the prisons' designed capacity. Iowa prison officials do not document the number of offenders who are parents, leaving children as innocent victims. (4)

•Of any state in the nation, at 53%, Iowa has the highest percentage of children among its homeless population. In 1989, there were 8,405 homeless children.(1)

•In 1989, $4,625,000. was awarded for comprehensive at-risk programs for parent education and support programs serving birth through 3-year-olds; and at-risk 3-4- and 5-year-olds. The requests for funding totaled nearly $24 million.

Iowa Code

"If a school offers a prekindergarten program, the program shall be designed to help children to work and play with others, to express themselves, to learn to use and manage their bodies, and to extend their interests and understanding of the world about them. The prekindergarten program shall relate the role of the family to the child's developing sense of self and perception of others. Planning and carrying out prekindergarten activities designed to encourage cooperative efforts between home and school shall focus on community resources. A prekindergarten teacher shall hold a license certifying that the holder is qualified to teach in prekindergarten. A nonpublic school which offers only a prekindergarten may, but is not required to, seek and obtain accreditation."
Iowa Administrative Code 256.11

"If the board of directors of a school district contracts for the operation of a prekindergarten program, the program shall be under the oversight of an appropriately licensed teacher. If the program contracted with was in existence on the effective date of the act, oversight of the program shall be provided by the district. If the program contracted with was not in existence on July 1,1989, the director of the program shall be a licensed teacher and the director shall provide program oversight. Any director of a program contracted with by a school district under this section who is not a licensed teacher is required to register with the department of education."
Iowa Administrative Code Section 256.11 subsection 1.

Public School At-Risk Plan

Currently in Iowa, each school district must have a plan to serve children at-risk. The Child Development Assistant Act, Senate File 2192, established competitive grant funding for at-risk three-, four-, and five-year-old children. These grants are subject to the availability of funds appropriated or otherwise available for the purpose of providing child development services for programs.

Discussion

Clearly, there is a need to increase and coordinate the number of resources devoted to the early years of a child's life. Early prevention is cost effective and more effective than later remediation or intervention. While funding for prevention is often difficult and the results require a longer time to measure, the strategy of prevention has greater impact. Funding for early intervention programs is often based on family income. Frequently, low-income families have clusters of risk factors that affect their lives. As early childhood theory does not support academic assessments as the sole and most valid determinant of need or ability, the single best qualifier for identifying young children "at-risk" may be the level of family income. If a priority must be established due to limitation of funding or space, children of low-income families should be a priority.

The need for coordination and effective use of services and resources, provided in both the public and private sectors, is great within the state. There is a need for increased public awareness of poverty and increased collaboration of agencies and services. Districts and communities have identified the programs that would most benefit their own community. It is in their best interest to continue early childhood advisory committees or regional child development councils to establish policy for implementation of an early childhood plan and to be given options for program funding.

Such efforts will move children and families out of poverty, encourage prevention, and provide a holistic approach to family stability. The greatest risk is to do nothing.

"We recommend that public schools develop partnerships with other early childhood programs and community agencies such that a network of appropriate support services are available for young children and their parents. Our hope is that a comprehensive system of early childhood services will benefit more children, make better use of public funds, and improve the quality of available programs."

---Maquoketa Early Childhood Advisory Committee

Preschool Programs

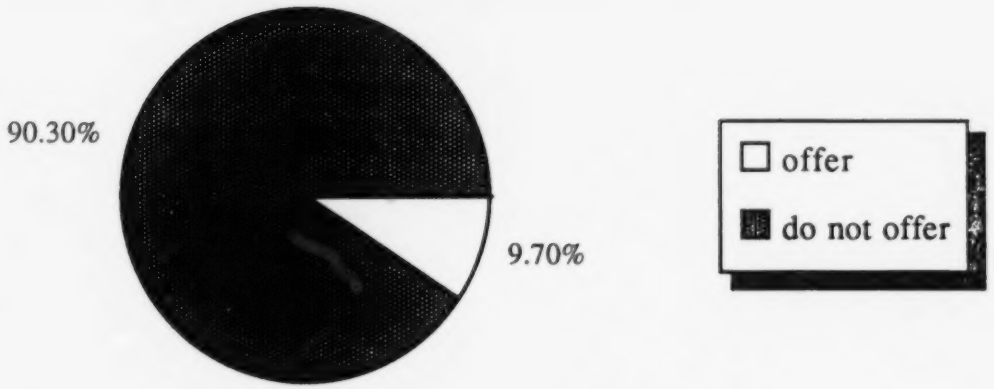
"Companies and businesses need to become more 'family friendly' by developing policies that address the changing needs of families and especially the needs of single parents."
---Winterset Early Childhood Committee

The vision for Iowa is to provide quality programs that are affordable and accessible, for all children, using state and local resources. The Iowa Local Early Childhood Advisory Committees were asked to study the need for preschool programs for all age-eligible 4-year-olds in the community.
By August 1, 1990, 351 local school districts had responded to the request. The following comments are from the committee reports.

Current Preschool Programs

School districts offering preschool programs that serve all age-eligible 4-year-olds were offered in 34 districts. These programs served an estimated 2,220 children.

Districts Offering Preschool for Age Eligible 4-year Olds

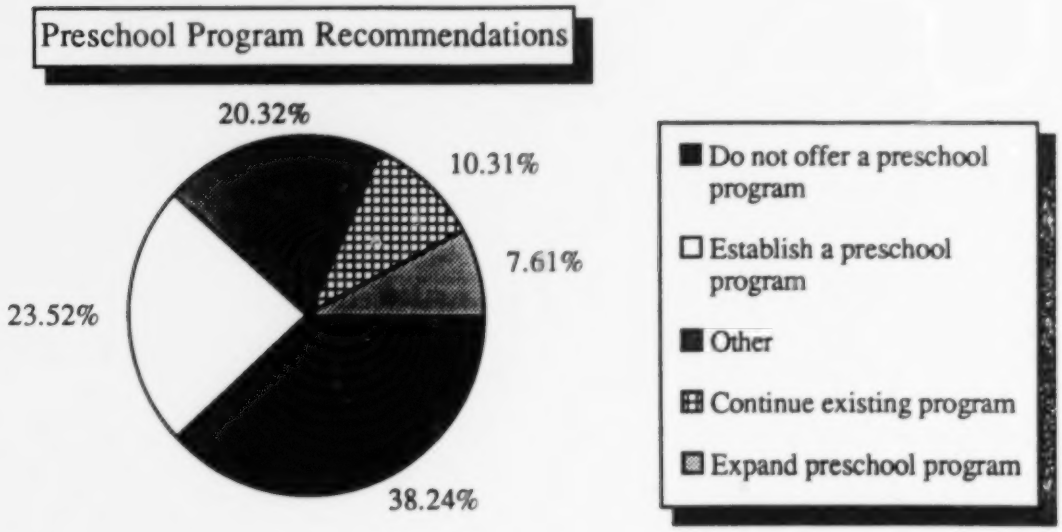


Needs and Recommendations

The committee recommendations from 340 districts regarding preschool were:

- 130 recommended not offering a preschool
- 80 recommended offering a preschool program
- 69 made other decisions
- 35 districts recommended to continue their existing program
- 26 districts recommended expanding their current program

Some districts found a greater population of preschoolers than expected. The total estimated number of preschool children not being served was **7,471.** However, the committee's perception of what programs should be offered varied.



Barriers

Districts identified financial barriers as the most significant, in making their decision. Space was the second most frequently chosen barrier and personnel the third.

Other Committee Concerns

Responsibility

The responsibility of offering district sponsored preschool was viewed differently by the various committees. Some district committees stated that preschool programs were not the district's responsibility. They felt that parental responsibility was being eroded by the school taking on greater and greater responsibilities. Concern was expressed regarding programs that would serve 3-year-olds, stating the preference to serve 4-year-old children first. Others committees stated they must serve their own district children before admitting children from other districts to the preschool program.

Private Providers

Many districts noted the possibility of coordinating programs that are in existence in the community with the utilization of district transportation and contracting with private providers. They stated that the extent of private programs was adequate in the community. Private providers are paid very low salaries and receive few, if any benefits. State funded programs may take away business from the private centers. The school should work with existing programs, rather than compete with them. In other communities, there were either no private preschools, or those that did exist were full and had a waiting list.

Funding

Financial barriers were most often cited in offering a preschool. However, committees had different views about funding. Some committees felt the district could not support a preschool program and there would not be enough children to become self-supporting. Other districts would like state funding for 4-year-olds to provide a preschool program that is voluntary, but available to all children. Most agreed that all age-eligible children should be allowed to attend, with a combination of state and local funds and scholarship or sliding fee options. Funding based on competitive grants, limits the access to children across the state. Heterogeneous groups of children, as well as mixed age groups, would be most appropriate.

Transportation

Districts expressed concern over busing young children with the K-12 population. They also recognized transportation as an issue for every education program. Preschool centers are likely to go out of business if children are unable to get to them. The length of distance children must be transported should be taken into account - especially, busing preschool handicapped children to receive services.

Quality

Programs should be accessible and affordable to all children. A sliding fee or scholarship fund should be established in preschool programs; staff wages and benefits should be comparable to other professional salaries.

The warning against creating academic programs for preschool children was noted by many districts. The need to provide a program that is developmentally appropriate for the age group as well as individual children is vital. Research was quoted that cautioned against the "inherent risks" of academic work at an early age.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) standards for developmentally appropriate programs that address the needs of the whole child were viewed as guidelines for future programs. Some districts identified preschool programs that are offered through the high school parenting class; others stated that programs not funded through a grant proposal, have now become a community goal; other committees were in the planning stage to begin a cooperative program.

Community Collaboration

For many committees, the long-range goal was to provide a preschool program for all age-eligible children, with district and community support and assistance of state funding. Coordination of programs and services, rather than duplication, was considered essential. Comprehensive programs should establish a sliding fee, utilize school transportation when possible, and coordinate with other community services.
A community supported resource directory of available preschool providers would be informative to parents. Strong statements were made to establish Resource and Referral Agencies in each county to assist parents in their awareness of choice and availability of programs. The coordination of programs and agencies will be needed to address the needs of children and families.

Iowa Statistics

Currently in Iowa, there are 1,250 licensed day care centers and preschools in Iowa. According to the Department of Human Services, preschools are on the decline and day care services are increasing. As parents become more educated consumers about child care, they will look more carefully at their choices for children.

- **In 1990, there are three counties in Iowa that have no licensed preschools.(2)**
- **Fifteen counties in Iowa have no licensed day care center as of June, 1990 (2)**
- **A total of 80 state funded at-risk prekindergarten programs were established by July 1, 1990.**

Iowa Code

Child care is defined as either family day care homes that provides care for six or fewer children at one time or day care centers that provide care for seven or more children. The Iowa Department of Human Services is responsible for licensing all child day care centers. Family day care homes that provide care for 7-11 children are required to be registered.

"If a school offers a prekindergarten program, the program shall be designed to help children to work and play with others, to express themselves, to learn to use and manage their bodies, and to extend their interests and understanding of the world about them. The prekindergarten program shall relate the role of the family to the child's developing sense of self and perception of others. Planning and carrying out prekindergarten activities designed to encourage cooperative efforts between home and school shall focus on community resources. A prekindergarten teacher shall hold a license certifying that the holder is qualified to teach in prekindergarten. A nonpublic school which offers only a prekindergarten may, but is not required to, seek and obtain accreditation." Iowa Administrative Code 256.11

"If the board of directors of a school district contracts for the operation of a prekindergarten program, the program shall be under the oversight of an appropriately licensed teacher. If the program contracted with was in existence on the effective date of the Act, oversight of the program shall be provided by the district. If the program contracted with was not in existence on July 1,1989, the director of the program shall be a licensed teacher and the director shall provide program oversight. Any director of a program contracted with by a school district under this section who is not a licensed teacher is required to register with the department of education."
Iowa Administrative Code Section 256.11 subsection 1.

Discussion

The decision to offer a district sponsored preschool should be made at the local level, based on significant input from the community. The option of full-day and full-year schedules, as well as parental choice, should be available. A comprehensive program coordinated with local agencies and existing private providers should be available for all children in a community. Heterogeneous grouping may be advantageous, rather than serving only one age or categorized group. Standards should ensure developmentally appropriate programs, significant family involvement and education, adequate adult-child ratios, facilities, and staff qualifications. The combination of federal, state, and local funding would assist many districts in offering such a program.

"In the near future, schools will need to take a more comprehensive vision of the nature of the child and their own role in society."
---Central Decatur Early Childhood Committee

Kindergarten Programs

Class Size
Transition Programs
Certification
Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum

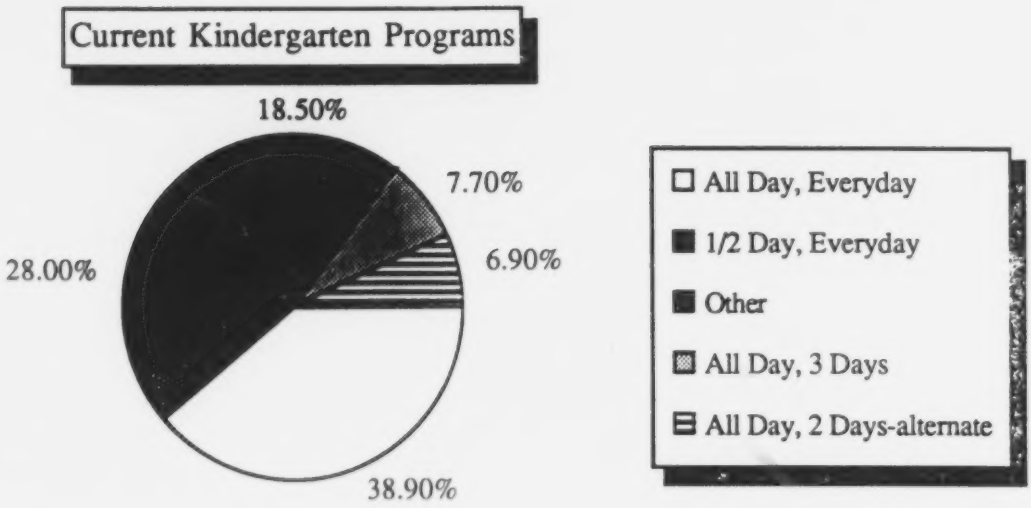
"We believe that with the combined efforts of parents, educators, community, and students, every child will succeed intellectually, physically, emotionally, and socially."
---Council Bluffs Early Childhood Committee

Local Early Childhood Advisory Committees were asked to identify the predominant kindergarten program offered in the school district and determine recommendations for future kindergarten programs. Currently, in Iowa, local districts must offer a kindergarten program, but the number of hours and the number of days are determined at the local level. Each child enrolled in kindergarten receives full-day per-pupil allocation. By August 1, 1990, 351 local school districts had responded with an early childhood committee report. The following comments, gathered from the reports address the type of kindergarten program offered in each district, recommendations for the future, information about kindergarten class size, licensure, transition classes, and curriculum.

Current Kindergarten Programs

Currently, the predominant kindergarten program in the 350 districts responding to this question is:

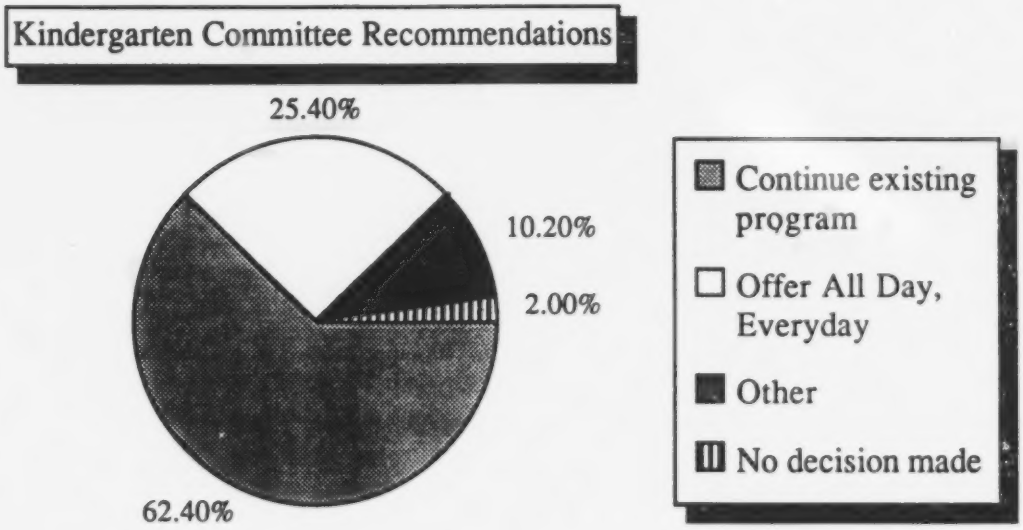
- 136 districts offer all day, everyday
- 98 districts offer half day, everyday
- 65 districts offer other kindergarten program models
- 27 districts offer all day kindergarten 3 days a week
- 24 districts offer all day kindergarten every other day



Committee Recommendations

The committee recommendations from 351 districts regarding kindergarten programs:

- 219 recommend continuation of the existing program
- 89 recommend offering all day, everyday kindergarten
- 36 made other recommendations
- 7 did not make a decision

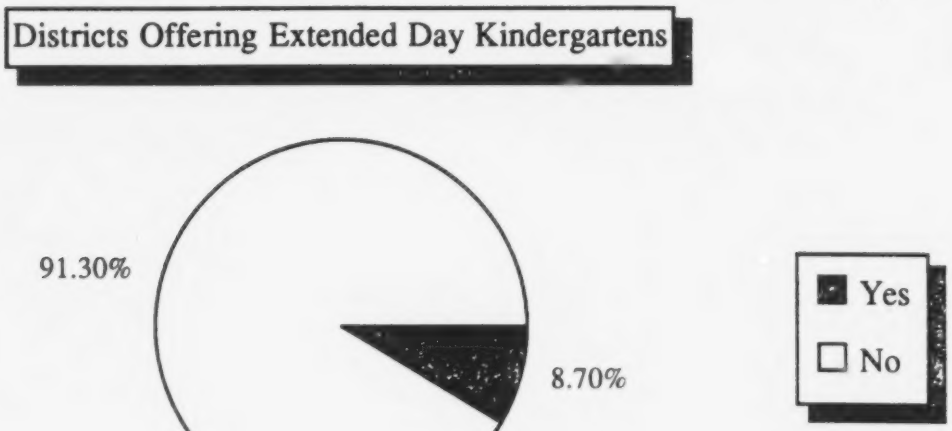


Barriers

Finance was the barrier most often selected as the most important to determining the kindergarten program. Space was most often identified as the second barrier, and personnel as the third most important barrier.

Other Kindergarten Programs

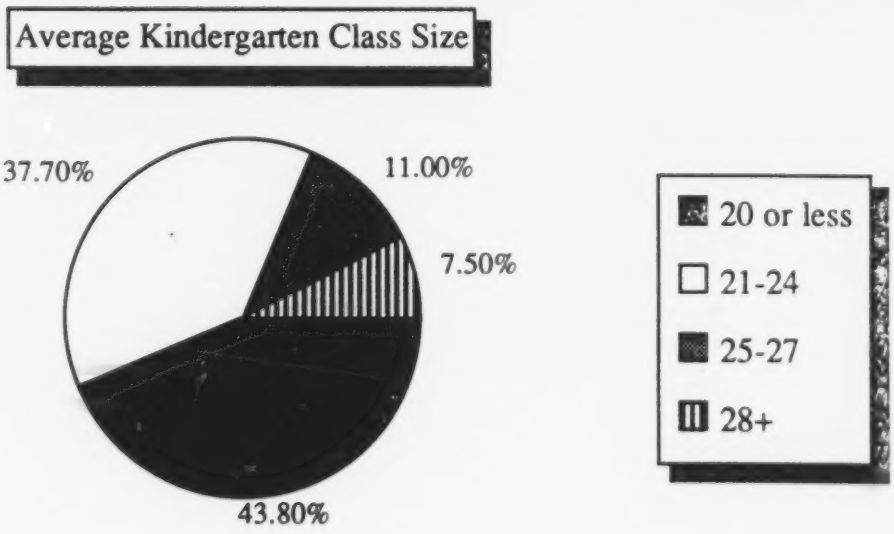
Extended day kindergarten programs, or other funded kindergarten programs, such as Chapter I, were offered in 30 districts of 346 responding. The total number of children served in these other kindergarten programs was 829.



Average Kindergarten Class Size

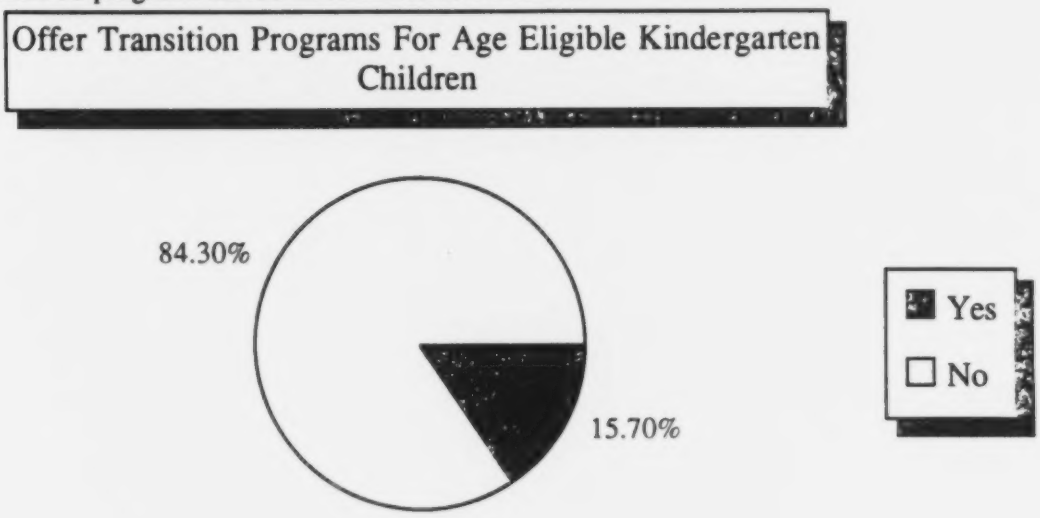
The average 1989-90 kindergarten class size of 345 districts reporting was:

- **151 districts had classes or 20 or less**
- **130 had classes of 21-24**
- **38 had classes of 25-27**
- **26 reported average kindergarten class size of 28 or more**



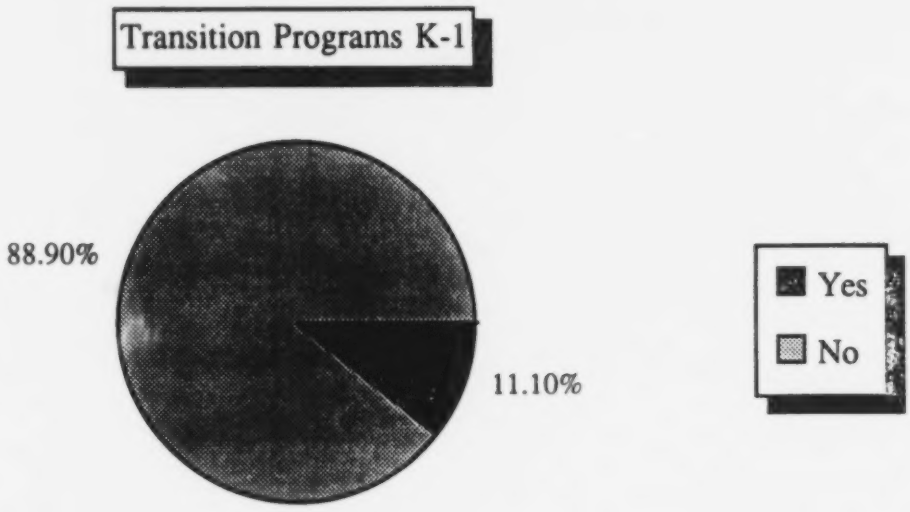
Transition Programs

Kindergarten transition programs that serve age-eligible kindergarten children who do not attend the regular kindergarten program were offered in 55 of 350 districts. These 55 programs served an estimated 951 children.

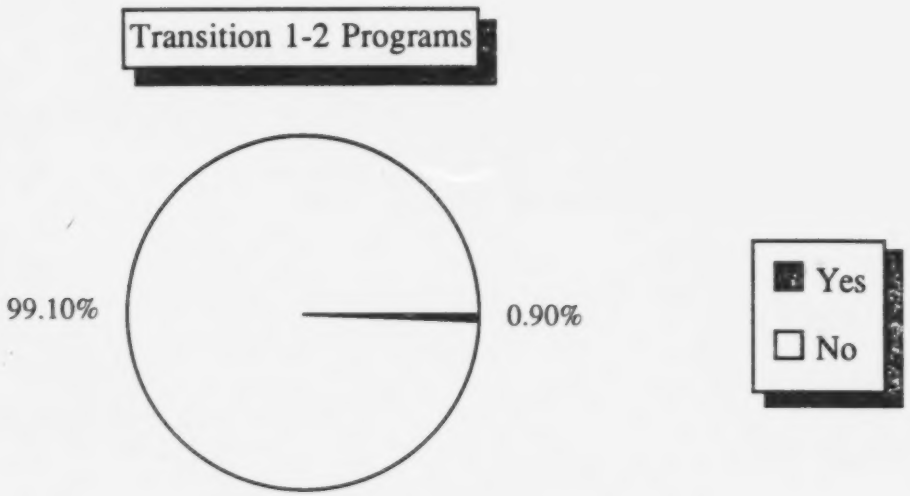


Transition Programs

Transition first grade programs serving children between kindergarten and regular first grade were offered in 39 districts, serving 501 children.



Transition programs between first and second grade were offered in 3 districts, serving 24 children.



Early Childhood Licensure

Prekindergarten-Kindergarten Licensure

The number of teachers holding a prekindergarten-kindergarten license was reported by 351 districts:

- 134 districts had two or more staff holding an early childhood license
- 111 districts did not have any staff with an early childhood license
- 106 districts had one or more teachers licensed for early childhood

The number of administrators holding an early childhood license was reported by 351 districts:

- 311 districts did not have an administrator with an early childhood license
- 26 districts had one or more administrators with an early childhood license
- 14 districts had two or more administrators with an early childhood license

Early Childhood Special Education Licensure

Teaching staff holding a license for early childhood special education:

- 237 districts had no teachers holding an early childhood special education license
- 114 districts had 1 or more teachers holding an early childhood special education license

Administrators holding early childhood special education license:

- 347 districts had no administrators holding an early childhood special education license
- 4 districts had an administrator holding an early childhood special education license

Other Committee Concerns

Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum

Overwhelmingly, the issue of appropriate practices for young children was a concern of local committees. Their comments generated a list of guidelines for kindergarten programs:

- **Kindergarten is not for academic acceleration.**
- **Programs should focus on the needs and of the whole child, including the areas of: social, emotional, physical, cognitive growth, and creativity.**
- **Children learn best through active involvement in their environment.**
- **Play is essential to positive development.**
- **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) curriculum guidelines should be implemented.**
- **Developmentally appropriate curriculum for young children should extend from prekindergarten through third grade.**
- **Highly structured academic classrooms are not in the best interest of young learners.**
- **All children can and should be successful.**
- **Learning environments should enrich children's lives.**
- **Staff should be trained in child development.**
- **Administration should support appropriate early childhood practices.**

Committees also discovered that "developmentally appropriate" was misunderstood by many. Staff inservice, training, and education for parents regarding appropriate practices is essential. There is also a need to communicate regarding the "perceived expectations." Private providers and parents often had misinformation about "academic" expectations for entry into kindergarten. Misconceptions led to less than optimal decisions for children.

Positive Impact

Districts commented on the advantages of full day, everyday programs:

- Full day programs provide more time in a less hurried environment.
- Full day programs are better for children at-risk and provide continuity.
- The community has supported the full day program for many years and is very pleased with it.
- Full day, everyday programs provide more consistency and fewer transitions between sites for children.
- Full day programs provide the time for more quality interactions between adults and children.
- Full day programs provide the time for a developmentally balanced curriculum.

Negative Impact

Some districts stated the negative side of full day, everyday programs:

- Programs are too stressful for young children.
- The community is overwhelmingly opposed.
- Alternate day programs allow children to rest-up.
- There is not enough space.
- Programs are for the convenience of the working parent, more than the education of the child.
- More time means more academic drill.
- Children experience many disruptions in their day.

Class Size

Lower class size was viewed as beneficial and desired by many committees. For some, half day programs kept class size smaller. No benefit was seen to move to full day, everyday programs and increase class size. A maximum class size of 20 in kindergarten and first grade was desired, 23 in second and third grade. The addition of full-time associates would assist districts in lowering pupil-teacher ratios.

Optional Programs

Optional year programs for age-eligible children who are "not-ready" for kindergarten, first, or second grade were considered by some districts. "Redshirting" was also viewed by some as an option only to the affluent. Low-income families enrolled their children as early as possible to increase success.

Committees strongly supported appropriate practices for young children. The extra-year program as an inappropriate practice was also discussed. Extra-year programs appear to lead to increased district costs and lower self-esteem of retained students.

Funding

Funding was a concern for most districts. The new school finance formula has forced deficit spending and unsuccessful bond issues have limited the space available for programs. Limited district funds may force some communities to serve the at-risk students in a full day program first. Equity for all children across the state was an issue. Some stated that full day, everyday programs should be required of all districts to get full funding. There should be continuity within the state and it should be carefully planned.

Alternative Program Models

Committees reported several alternative models of programs:

- Offer half day first semester, full day second semester.
- Offer both half day and full day.
- Offer full day, year-round with child care available and integration of handicapped students.
- Begin with one building and expand each year to full day programs.
- Plan and move to all day, everyday in the future.
- Provide a five hour program with optional child care after the kindergarten program, providing family style breakfast, lunch, and snacks.
- Phase out "readiness programs" and focus on developmentally appropriate full day programs.
- Begin all day kindergarten as part of a K-3 early childhood unit.
- Design a full day program for at-risk kindergartners.

Iowa Code

The kindergarten programs shall include experiences designed to develop healthy emotional and social habits and growth in the language arts and communication skills, as well as a capacity for the completion of individual tasks, and to protect and increase physical well-being with attention given to the development of life skills and human growth and development. A kindergarten teacher shall be licensed to teach in kindergarten. 256.11(2) Iowa Administrative Code

A kindergarten program complying with the educational programs description in subrule 12.4(2) shall be operated by a school district. The number of instructional days within the school calendar and the length of the school day for kindergarten shall be defined by the board.
281-12.2(6) Iowa Administrative Code

Each child enrolled in a kindergarten program generates a full per pupil allocation for the district.

Iowa Statistics

In the 1990-91 school year, there are 430 public school districts in Iowa. Of the 430 districts, the predominant kindergarten program offered, as reported to the Department of Education, is:

- 180 districts offer full day, everyday kindergarten
- 115 offer half day, everyday kindergarten programs
- 135 districts offer a different model or combination of models.

Those models include: alternate day programs; 3 days a week; 2 and 1/2 days a week; alternate day program one semester, and full day, everyday program the second semester; or half day, first semester and full day, everyday, second semester.

- In 1989-90, there were 38,136 children enrolled in public school kindergarten.
- There were 3,893 children enrolled in nonpublic kindergarten.

Discussion

The Local Early Childhood Advisory Committees did not paint a "one-size-fits-all" picture regarding kindergarten programs. Each identified programs they felt were needed in their community and concerns about their choice. They did, however, agree that all young children should receive equity of services and the local district should make that choice.

Committees voiced strong concern over the appropriateness of the curriculum for young children. However, they also expressed interest in extra-year programs, the same kind of programs, most early childhood experts view as "inappropriate," based on research findings. Clearly, there is confusion over the best practices for young children. Early childhood educators and parents will need to research what programs provide for success, positive self-esteem, discourage dropouts, and help all children develop a healthy disposition to learning.

Issues surfaced about the "education" or "care" of children and "developmental versus academic" programs. The care and education of young children go hand-in-hand. They are virtually, inseparable. Children are affected, developmentally and intellectually, in all environments. Programs can incorporate meaningful academic skills in an intellectually stimulating setting but, no single teaching method is good for diverse groups of children. However, younger children benefit from more informal learning environments that encourage play, cooperative activities, experimentation, and active involvement in the environment. Quality kindergarten programs will include decisions regarding curriculum, assessment strategies, length of the school day, teacher training and philosophy, parent education and participation, and comprehensive services for the well being of the child and family. Getting each child off to the best start possible should be the ultimate basis for all decisions and policy. The responsibility does not rest in any one hand, alone.

"Early education should provide a stimulating, safe, and nurturing environment to enrich and expand the learning environment for young children in home, school, and the community."

---Creston Early Childhood Committee

School Age Child Care

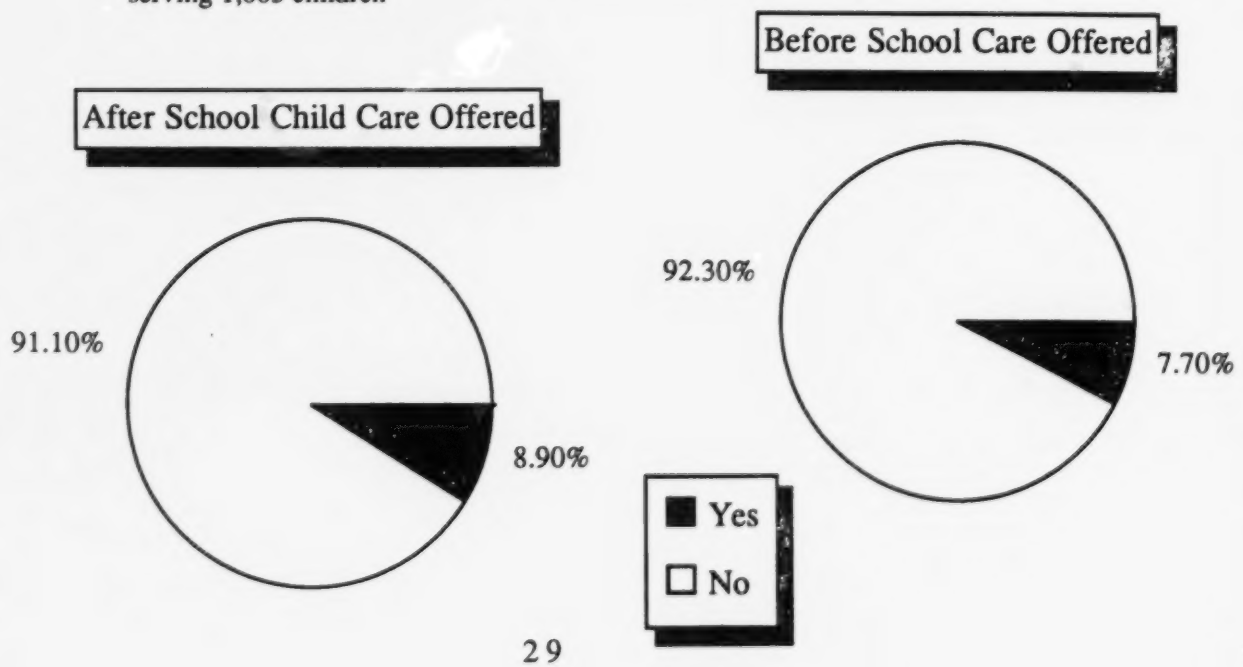
"There are children waiting at the school doors when teachers arrive in the morning and children are on the streets unsupervised in the afternoons."
---Ruthven-Ayrshire Early Childhood Committee

Iowa Local Early Childhood Advisory Committees studied where young children spent their time before and after school hours, during school vacations, and holidays. They became aware of the large number of children who were left alone during the hours and days school was not in session. Consequently, the need for school age child care (SACC) was identified by many districts as an area of concern. The following results are from committee reports and executive summaries.

Current School Age Child Care Programs

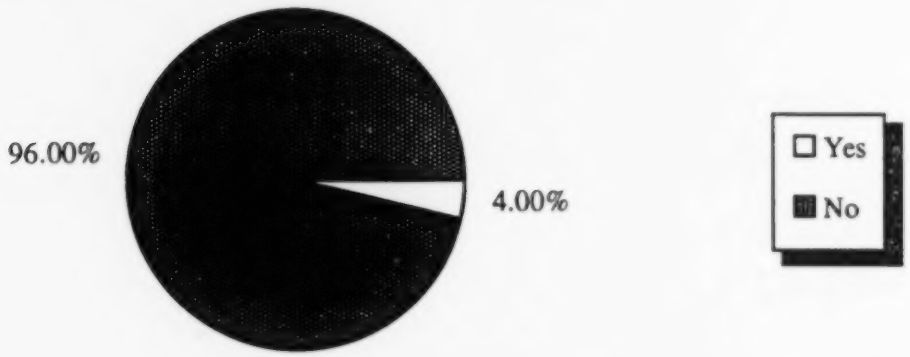
Local Early Childhood Advisory Committees returned 351 reports by August 1, 1990.
Of those responding:

- after school care was offered by 31 districts, serving 3,652 children
- 27 of the 351 districts offered before school care, serving 2,656 children
- 14 districts offered child care during summer vacations, serving 581 children.
- child care was provided by 11 districts on school holidays, serving 1,005 children

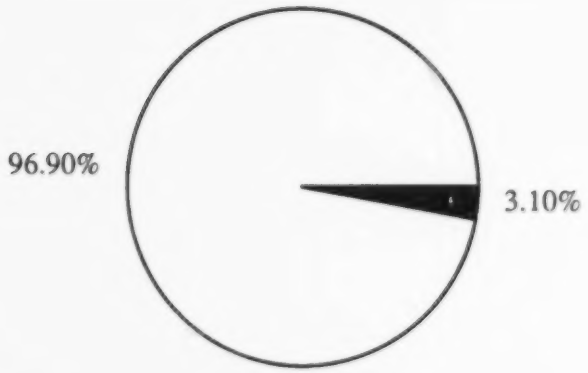


School Age Child Care Programs

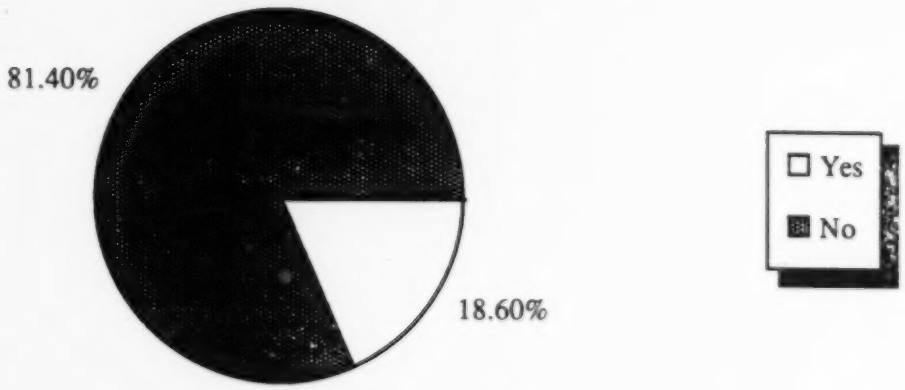
Care During Summer Vacations Offered



Care During School Holidays Offered



Child Care Offered in Collaboration With Another Agency

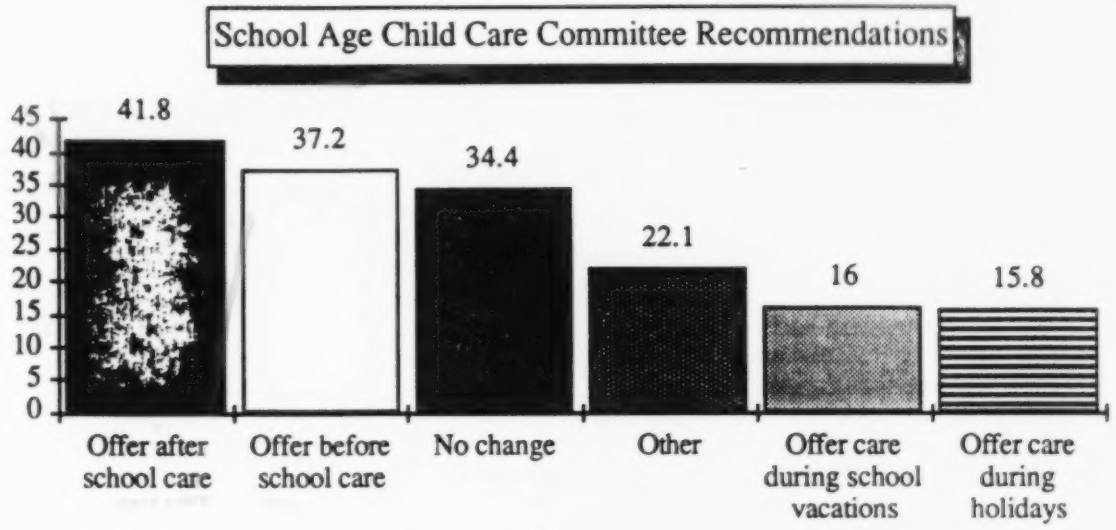


Needs and Recommendations

The committee recommendations regarding school age child care were:

- 146 to offer after school care
- 130 to offer before school care
- 120 recommended no change in the current policy
- 56 to provide care during summer vacations
- 55 to offer care during school holidays
- 77 made other recommendations
- 43 did not make a decision

Many districts stated that there was a strong need for a breakfast program and planned to begin offering a breakfast program in the 1990-91 school year. In some districts currently offering summer child care programs, the demand for summer care has exceeded the programs current capacity.



Barriers

The primary barrier most identified by committees, was finance. Personnel and space were equally perceived to be secondary factors to the implementation of a school age child care program.

Other Committee Concerns

Responsibility

While most districts expressed concern for children, they also voiced their opinion about parental responsibility. Committees felt it was the parents' responsibility to care for their children, not the responsibility of the state. They commented that the school had enough to do and there were limits to what the school could accomplish. Citizens also expressed concern about their taxes increasing because of additional school services. Some stated they used family members for this type of child care and were satisfied with that arrangement; some would not support anything that would lessen parental and family responsibility.

Transportation
Transportation was stated as an issue both in rural and urban centers. Rural areas questioned the appropriateness of care in a rural area, due to the distance involving transportation. Other rural areas stated that their children were more at-risk when left alone because of the distance and isolation.

Sick Child Care
The need for care facilities for sick children was identified in some communities. These same communities were planning to investigate community services such as hospitals, retired senior citizens, and public nursing services to improve this situation.

Funding
Funding was a factor in many decisions. Committees stated that they would need money to start-up a SACC program and may need remodeling funds to implement a quality program and purchase appropriate equipment. They need funding options and must be able to charge a fee and to utilize other nonprofit agencies to offer this service.

Community Involvement
SACC was considered by many a community responsibility. Sixty-four districts currently offer some type of child care in collaboration with another agency. Quality programs for children are best coordinated by one agency. SACC programs may provide the continuity in care required for children in a changing society. However, they should not be solely responsible. The established trust and availability of the local district facilities throughout the community make the school the most logical choice as a coordinating agency. Communities suggested possibilities to assist in resolving the SACC problem, such as: a telephone care line or phone-a-friend; classes to teach children skills needed when they are alone; a center independently governed by a parent advisory board; providing SACC for Head Start children; collaborating with Camp Fire, YMCA, and YWCA services; AEA homework hotlines; and planning for more inter-generational activities. Phase III funding was considered by some districts as an option to reach the school goal of SACC.

Program Quality
The quality of the program was addressed by many committees. All SACC programs should be licensed, have activity options, incorporate the arts, relieve stress for children in a positive environment that provides choice and opportunities, and offer a recreational extension of the day. Programs should be staffed by concerned personnel who are paid professional wages and benefits.

Iowa Statistics

- **In 1987, over 60% of Iowa families with children under six had no adult caretaker at home, at least part of the day, due to employed or out-of-home parents. That figure is projected to go higher by 1995.(3)**

- **Between 1970 and 1987, the participation of women in the labor force with children under six had nearly doubled, creating a host of increased demands upon the child care system.(3)**

Iowa Code

Currently in Iowa, schools may operate or contract for the operation of a program to provide child day care to children not enrolled in school or to students enrolled in kindergarten through grade six before and after school, or to both. The person employed to be responsible for a program operated by a board shall be an appropriately licensed teacher under chapter 260 or the program operated by contract with the board shall be licensed as a child care center under Chapter 237A. (Section 279.49)
A sliding fee may be established. Programs should include parent involvement in program design and direction. Activities should be designed to further children's physical, mental, social, and emotional development. Programs may also include a parent education component.

Discussion

It is often assumed that once a child enters school, the need for child care disappears. The reality is that young children are in school less than half of the time most parents are at work. The hours and days or partial days a child is left alone are many. To a child, they seem longer than clock time. Communities are now more alerted to the need and the benefits of offering SACC programs. Local committees across Iowa may view school age child care as an opportunity to help children reach their full potential, rather than be placed at risk, as a result of having no care.

The risks for children being alone and unsupervised are many:

- physical risk
- emotional risks of loneliness and rejection
- risks to family relationships, such as guilt
- inappropriate responsibilities for the age of the child
- risks to community in the form of vandalism

Research has shown that premature responsibility for self-care can cause emotional scars. Teachers also reported in the 1987 Harris poll that being left on their own after school is the number one cause of students' having difficulty in school.(8)

A coordinated community effort to share the responsibility and improve the quality of the service is essential. It is in the best interest of all involved, to face the reality of children being alone. Child care that is unsafe is unfair to children. Communities can help families by offering a safe alternative.

"Our mission is to develop young children into tomorrow's responsible citizens."

---Fort Dodge Early Childhood Committee

Parent Education and Support Programs

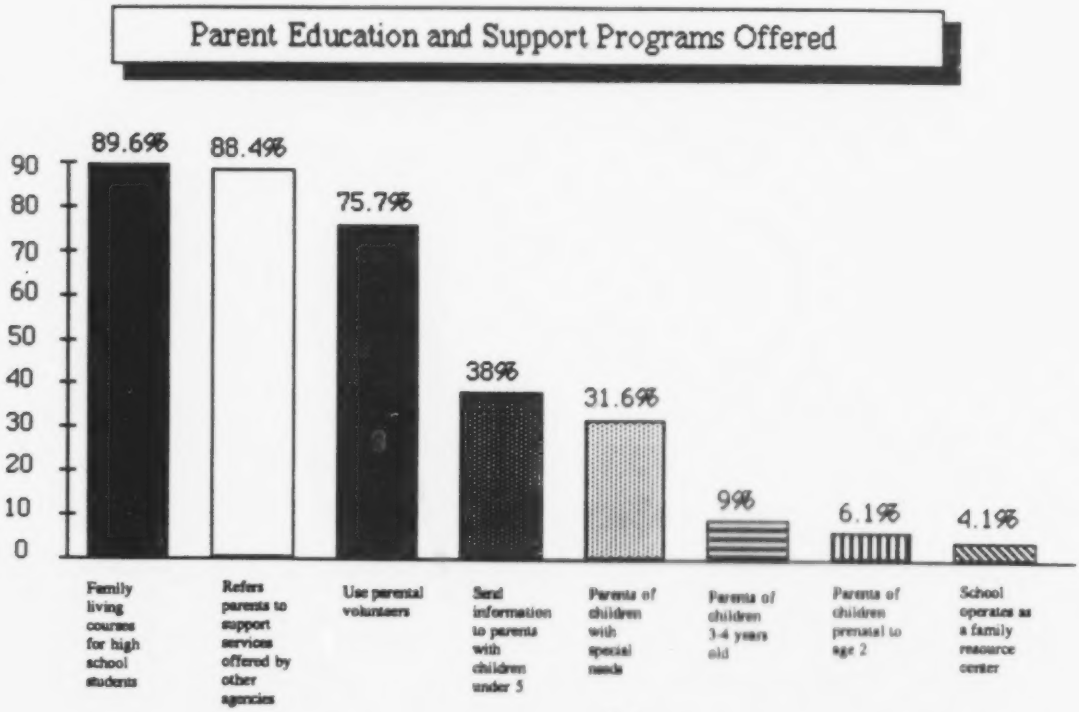
"The dilemma continues: How to foster parental involvement and responsibility in and for their children and meet the needs of children who other wise are not receiving proper care. Are the suggested programs for the child's good or even more for the parent convenience?...Being a parent isn't always convenient....What about the truly needy situation?...A lot of questions - not many answers..."

---Glenwood Early Childhood Committee

Local Early Childhood Advisory Committees were asked to identify the kinds of parent and family education and support programs offered in the district. By August 1, 1990, 351 districts had responded. The following comments state their findings.

Current Programs Offered

District sponsored parent education programs were offered in the following categories, as reported from 350 districts who completed this section:



Need

Committees discovered a need to increase parental awareness of the services available in the community. This could be accomplished through:

- outreach programs
- home visits
- family resource centers
- family activity programs
- workshops
- parent library
- AEA classes
- parent education coordinator
- community service agencies
- community sponsored education classes
- information packets or resource guides
- community resource center
- information fair at school functions
- baby sitting workshops

Other Committee Concerns

Communities listed other concerns regarding parental involvement, among them were:

- Special populations, such as at-risk families and families with special needs children, will need increased attention.
- The underinsured and noninsured children and families should be addressed.
- Single parent families may be struggling and need additional assistance.

High School Programs

A significant number of comments regarding parenting skills related to high school students were reported:

- **Parenting skills should be required of every high school student.**
- **Family life education should be mandated in the school curriculum.**
- **On-site child care should be provided for teen parents enrolled in school, as well as, parenting, support and education classes.**
- **Experiences with young children are needed for each high school student, such as, observing young children, high school and young children linked as pals, child care experiences, collaborative learning, and intergenerational experiences.**

Iowa Code

Current Iowa standards do not include course work in parenting skills as a requirement for high school graduation.

Discussion

Because parents are a child's first teacher and play a critical role in the foundations for success, we must support them in that role. As parents seek additional ways to interact with the education of their children and continue their significant role in the child's development, it will be necessary to integrate and coordinate service agencies and resources. Business and community agencies should be partners in this collective effort. Employees can and must be encouraged to become involved with education. Employers have the potential of providing working parents with the time and incentives to do so. Community agencies have the potential of increasing the services available in coordination with the education community.

Those seeking to help families communicate, learn together and develop confidence and competence can have significant impact. Among the effects of parent participation are: improved parent-child relationships, increased positive parental attitudes toward school, enhanced self-esteem in children, and improved academic achievement for children. John Dewey suggested that what the best and the wisest parent wants for his or her own child, is what the community must want for all of its children.

"The issue is whether the school adjusts to society or society adjusts to the school. Most institutions are slow to adjust to change. Even though society has changed, schools have been slow to adjust to society's needs. Every child should have the opportunity to take advantage of services available to them."

---Algona Early Childhood Committee

Community Programs, Needs, and Future Plans

"The decisions will reach far beyond the bonds of financial commitment in brick and mortar projects to expanded facilities and programs. The decisions are critical, because they will affect the very foundation of our children's social, psychological and physical makeup."

---Lamoni Early Childhood Committee

As a result of studying the community programs and needs for young children and families, local committees:

- made recommendations for state and local policy
- initiated changes in local programs
- identified local and regional services
- established a vision for future plans
- prioritized their needs
- formed advocacy groups
- established face-to-face communication with others involved in the care and education of young children
- increased awareness
- opened doors to new partnerships

The following comments, from executive summaries, reflect additional discoveries of the local committees regarding state and local policy and future plans.

State and Local Policy

- More emphasis needs to be put on the early childhood years; funding at the beginning is a priority.
- We must convince legislators to fund programs.
- A funding formula that includes 4-year-olds is necessary to implement programs. A change should focus on consistency and stability of programs and salaries and better delivery of services.
- Adequate funding for the entire state is more expedient and efficient than competing for a limited amount of grant money.
- When limited money is available, it should go to those most in need, based on income guidelines.
- The public school should continue to be the vehicle for funding the early childhood system.
- Local choice of early childhood programs is important to meet individual and diverse community needs.

- The ability to contract from local providers and establish alternate-site-based programs are important for implementation of programs.
- As educators, we hope that parents want the responsibility of their children from birth through age 5. However, when parents are not able to find day care or take inadequate care of their children, then the responsibility should be shared by government, churches, service agencies, and the private sector.
- The school can serve as a catalyst for the community to bring about effective services. It may function in the role of a family service center or a home-school coordinator.
- Regional agencies, such as the AEA and Resource and Referral centers, are necessary to support early childhood initiatives.
- Leadership from professionals with a strong sense of child development is important.
- Regulations that prohibit agencies from networking, sharing family data, and blending funds must be changed.
- Variations in guidelines prohibit quality and consistency in programs.
- A coordinated funding and delivery system is critical to implement an early childhood delivery system.
- Our goal is to make better use of resources and develop partnerships with the business and private sector.
- More flexible employee policies would support development of child-centered policy.
- Businesses need to become more "family friendly."
- Continued local or regional committees will facilitate comprehensive services tailored to the needs of the community and support developmentally appropriate practices.
- The traditional site and delivery of service may need to change.
- We will focus on child centered environments.
- Establish stronger parent and family education components; support and encourage significant parent involvement.
- We will work to strengthen the role of parents as the first educator.
- NAEYC guidelines should impact prekindergarten through third grade classrooms, not just kindergarten.
- The committee helped clarify early childhood issues, linked advocates for young children, and improved communication among agencies and school groups.

"It is further recommended (to the state) that future state aid formula for school funding considerations should allow preschool age children to be counted in order to provide funds and incentive for school districts to begin child care programs."

--- M-F-L Early Childhood Committee

In summary...

Finding solutions to the needs for quality early childhood programs and comprehensive family services must be among our highest priorities. The gap between the need for services and the availability of programs is evident. Our solutions and choices must be for the long term, rather than quick-fix or temporary.

The comprehensive study of the Local Early Childhood Advisory Committees will serve to inform decision makers at the state and local levels. Their decisions to support early childhood efforts, with both existing and additional resources, will affect families, educators, and other service providers in the early childhood system.

There is growing consensus among experts that child care and early education are inseparable. They must be considered as one in planning for young children. Children learn from their surroundings and their experiences, whether they take place at home, school, the neighbor's house or the child care center. Comprehensive programs that provide consistency for young children are essential. Schools may be the best positioned agent and the catalyst to coordinate and integrate - rather than segregate these efforts.

The ultimate goal is to provide experiences and environments that allow each child to experience success, respect, and to receive a quality education. The choices are not simple. The parties involved are many. As the "traditional" model of school hours, days, and programs transform to meet the needs of society, the greatest and most exciting possibilities for change concern programming for young children and their families. As doors open, where they have been closed, and partnerships form to focus on family services, those involved in early childhood efforts are the change agents. There now exists an opportunity for local, regional, and state programs to establish a coordinated support system for the delivery of early childhood services. This multidimensional support system that encourages communication, sharing and coordination of services and agencies, will increase the numbers of children and families served, and ensure the quality of comprehensive programs with sensitivity to the diversity of children and families. The fragmentation between early childhood and elementary education can be replaced with positive linkages between programs and continuation of early childhood theory and policy.

The continuation of Local Early Childhood Advisory Committees have the potential of impacting decisions and assisting programs that address the wholistic needs of children and families in the community. The decisions made will impact children for years to come. We are creating the legacy for their earliest years.

"The highest stakes test of all is our ability to help children realize their full potential."

---S.J. Meissels, Educational Leadership, April 1989.

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Iowa Public School Districts

Ackley-Geneva
Adair-Casey
Adel-DeSoto
Akron Westfield
Albert City-Truesdale
Albia
Alburnett
Alden
Algona
Allamakee
Allison-Bristow
Alta
Amana
Ames
Anamosa
Andrew
Anita
Ankeny
Anthon-Oto
Aplington
Ar-We-Va
Armstrong-Ringsted
Atlantic
Audubon
Aurelia
Avoha

Ballard
Battle Creek
Baxter
Beaman-Conrad-Liscomb
Bedford
Belle Plaine
Bellevue
Belmond
Bennett
Benton
Bettendorf
Blakesburg
Bondurant-Farrar
Boone
Boyden-Hull
Bridgewater-Fontanelle
Britt
Brooklyn-Guernsey-Malcom
Buffalo Center-Rake
Burlington
Burt

C & M
Cal
Calamus-Wheatland
Camanche
Cardinal
Carlisle
Carroll
Carson-Macedonia
Cedar Falls
Cedar Rapids
Cedar Valley
Center Point
Centerville
Central
Central City
Central Clinton
Central Dallas
Central Decatur
Central Lee
* Central Lyon
Central Webster
Chariton
* Charles City
Charter Oak-Ute
Cherokee
Clarence-Lowden
Clarinda
Clarion
Clarke
Clarksville
Clay Central
* Clear Creek
Clear Lake
Clearfield
Clinton
Colfax-Mingo
* College
Collins-Maxwell
Colo
Columbus
Coon Rapids-Bayard
Corning
Corwith-Wesley
Council Bluffs
* Crestland
Creston

Dallas Center-Grimes
Danville
Davenport
Davis County
Dayton
Decorah
Deep River-Millersburg
* Delwood
Denison
* Denver
Des Moines Independent
Dexfield
Diagonal
Dike
Dow City-Arion
* Dows
Dubuque
Dumont
Dunkerton
Dunlap
Durant
Dysart-Geneseo
Eagle Grove
Earlham
East Buchanan
East Central
East Greene
East Monona
East Union
Eastern Allamakee
Eastwood
Eddyville
Edgewood-Colesburg
Eldora-New Providence
Elk Horn-Kimballton
Emmetsburg
English Valleys
Essex
Estherville
Everly
Exira

Fairfield
Farragut
Floyd Valley
Fonda
Forest City
Fort Dodge
Fort Madison
Fox Valley
Fredericksburg
Fremont
Fremont-Mills

Galva-Holstein
Garnavillo
Garner-Hayfield
Garwin
George
Gilbert
Gilmore City-Bradgate
Gladbrook
Glenwood
Glidden-Ralston
Goldfield
Graettinger
Grand
Grand Valley
Green Mountain
Greene
Greenfield
Grinnell-Newburg
Griswold
Grund Center
Guthrie Center
Guttenberg

H-L-V
Hamburg
Hampton
Harlan
Harmony
Harris-Lake Park
Hartley-Melvin
Hedrick
Highland
Hinton
Howard-Winneshiek
Hubbard
Hudson
Humboldt

Ida Grove
Independence
Indianola
Interstate 35
Iowa City
Iowa Falls
Iowa Valley
Irwin

Janesville
* Jefferson
Jesup
Johnston

Kanawha
Keokuk
Keota
Kingsley-Pierson
Klemme
Knoxville

L D F
* La Porte City
Lake City
Lake Mills
Lake View-Auburn
Lakota
Lamoni
Laurens-Marathon
Lawton-Bronson
LeMars
Lenox
Lewis Central
Lincoln
Lincoln Central
Lineville-Clio
Linn-Mar
Lisbon
Little Rock
Logan-Magnolia
Lohrville
* Lone Tree
Lost Nation
Louisa-Muscatine
Lu Verne
Lynnville-Sully
Lytton

M-F-L
Madrid
Mallard
Malvern
Manilla
Manning
Manson
Maple Valley
Maquoketa
Maquoketa Valley
Mar-Mac
Marcus
Marion Independent
Marshalltown
Martensdale-St Marys
Mason City
Maurice-Orange City
* Mediapolis
Melcher-Dallas
Meriden-Cleghorn
Meservey-Thornton
Mid-Prairie
* Midland
Missouri Valley
Monroe
* Montezuma
Monticello
Moravia
Mormon Trail
Morning Sun
Moulton-Udell
Mount Ayr
Mount Pleasant
Mount Vernon
Murray
Muscatine

Nashua
Nesco
Nevada
New Hampton
New Hartford
New London
New Market
Newell-Providence
Newton
Nishna Valley
Nora Springs-Rock Falls
North Central
North Fayette
North Kossuth
North Linn
North Mahaska
North Polk
North Scott
North Tama County
North Winneshiek
Northeast
Northeast Hamilton
* Northwest Webster
Northwood-Kensett
* Norwalk
Norway

Oakland
Odebolt-Arthur
Oelwein
Ogden
Okoboji
Olin
Orient-Macksburg
Osage
Oskaloosa
Ottumwa
Oxford Junction

Palmer
Panorama
Parkersburg
Paton-Churdan
Paullina
Pekin
Pella
Perry
Plainfield
Pleasant Valley
Pleasantville
Pocahontas
Pomeroy
Postville
Prairie
Prairie City
Prescott
Preston
Primghar

Radcliffe
Red Oak
Reinbeck
Remsen-Union
Riceville
Rock Valley
Rockwell City
Rockwell-Swaledale
Roland-Story
Rolfe
Rudd-Rockford-Marble Rock
Russell
Ruthven-Ayrshire

Sac
Saint Ansgar
Sanborn
Saydel Consolidated
* Schaller
* Schleswig
* Scranton
Semco
Sentral
Sergeant Bluff-Luton
Seymour
Sheffield-Chapin
Shelby
Sheldon
Shellsburg
Shenandoah
Sibley-Ocheyedon
Sidney
Sigourney
Sioux Center
Sioux City
Sioux Rapids-Rembrandt
Sioux Valley
Solon
* South Clay
South Hamilton
South Page
South Tama County
South Winneshiek
Southeast Polk
Southeast Warren
Spencer
Spirit Lake
Springville
Stanton
Starmont
Steamboat Rock
Storm Lake
Stratford
Stuart-Menlo
Sumner
* Sutherland

Terril
Thompson
Tipton
Titonka
Treynor
Tri-Center
Tri-County
Tripoli
Turkey Valley
Twin Cedars
Twin Rivers

Underwood
Union-Whitten
United
* Urbana
* Urbandale

Valley
Van Buren
* Van Meter
Ventura
Villisca
Vinton
Waco
Wall Lake
Walnut
Wapello
Wapsie Valley
Washington
Waterloo
Waukee
Waverly-Shell Rock
Wayne
Webster City
Wellsburg
West Bend
West Branch
West Burlington
West Central
West Delaware County
West Des Moines
West Harrison
West Liberty
West Lyon
West Marshall
West Monona
* West Sioux
Western Dubuque
Westwood
Whiting
Williamsburg
Willow
Wilton
Winfield-Mt. Union
Winterset
Woden-Crystal Lake
Woodbine
Woodbury Central
Woodward-Granger

* District reports not received as of 9/28/90

"Each second we live is a new and unique moment of the universe, a moment that never was before and never will be again. And what do we teach our children in school? We teach them that two and two make four and that Paris is the capital of France. When will we also teach them what they are? We should say to each of them: Do you know what you are? You are a marvel. You are unique. In all the world there is no other child exactly like you. In the millions of years that have passed, there has never been a child like you. And look at your body ---what a wonder it is! Your legs, your arms, your cunning fingers, the way you move! You may become a Shakespeare, a Michelangelo, a Beethoven. You have the capacity for anything. Yes, you are a marvel. And when you grow up, can you then harm another who is, like you a marvel? You must cherish one another. You must work-- we must all work-- to make this world worthy of its children."

...Pablo Casals